

Amendments to the Claims:

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (Original) A hydrophilic porous polymeric bead comprising a three dimensional open-cell lattice of a water-soluble polymeric material, the lattice having a porous structure providing in the bead an intrusion volume of at least about 3 ml/g.

Claim 2 (Original) A hydrophilic porous polymeric bead according to claim 1, wherein the intrusion volume is at least about 3.5 ml/g.

Claim 3 (Original) A hydrophilic porous polymeric bead according to claim 2, wherein the intrusion volume is at least about 4 ml/g.

Claim 4 (Original) A hydrophilic porous polymeric bead according to claim 3, wherein the intrusion volume is at least about 4.5 ml/g.

Claim 5 (Cancelled)

Claim 6 (Currently Amended) A hydrophilic porous polymeric bead according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 5~~ claim 1 formed from an emulsion.

Claim 7 (Original) A hydrophilic porous polymeric bead according to claim 6, wherein the emulsion has an internal phase in the range of from about 50% to about 80%.

Claim 8 (Currently Amended) A hydrophilic porous polymeric bead according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 7~~ claim 1, wherein the lattice comprises more than one distinct pore type.

Claim 9 (Currently Amended) A hydrophilic porous polymeric bead according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 8~~claim 1, wherein the bead comprises surfactant moieties dispersed throughout the lattice.

Claim 10 (Currently Amended) A hydrophilic porous polymeric bead according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 9~~claim 1, wherein an active ingredient is disposed in the lattice.

Claim 11 (Currently Amended) A population of hydrophilic porous polymeric beads according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 10~~claim 1, the population having a substantially uniform size distribution.

Claim 12 (Original) A method for producing a population of porous hydrophilic polymeric beads according to claim 11 comprising the steps of:

- a) providing an emulsion comprising an aqueous phase, an organic phase and a hydrophilic polymeric material;
- b) providing a fluid medium at a temperature effective for freezing the emulsion;
- c) injecting the emulsion into the fluid medium to form frozen droplets;
- d) isolating the droplets, and
- e) freeze-drying the droplets to form beads.

Claim 13 (Original) A method according to claim 12, wherein the beads are chemically cross-linked by a cross-linking agent after freeze-drying.

Claim 14 (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 12 or ~~claim 13~~, wherein the emulsion comprises an emulsifier.

Claim 15 (Currently Amended) A method according to ~~any one of claims 12 to 14~~claim 12, wherein the emulsion comprises a continuous aqueous phase with the hydrophilic polymeric material dissolved therein and a discontinuous organic phase.

Claim 16 (Currently Amended) A method according to ~~any of claims 12 to 15~~claim 12 wherein the polymeric material is selected from one or more from the following group of polymers; poly(vinyl alcohol), poly(ethylene glycol), poly(ethylene oxide), poly(vinyl pyrrolidone), poly(acrylic acid), poly(acrylic acid)-sodium salt, poly(acrylamide), poly(sodium styrene sulfonate), poly(2-acrylamido-2-methyl-1-propanesulfonic acid) and polysaccharides.

Claim 17 (Currently Amended) A method according to ~~any of claims 12 to 16~~claim 12, wherein the organic phase comprises a solvent selected from one or more of; heptane, n-hexane, isoctane, dodecane, decane, toluene, xylene, cyclohexane, mineral oil, dichloromethane, dichoroethane and tetrachloroethane.

Claim 18 (Currently Amended) A method according to ~~any one of claims 12 to 17~~claim 12, wherein the aqueous phase comprises an active ingredient for incorporation into the beads.

Claim 19 (Currently Amended) A method according to ~~any of claims 12 to 18~~claim 12, wherein the organic phase comprises a hydrophobic active ingredient for incorporation into the beads.

Claim 20 (Currently Amended) A method according to ~~any of claims 12 to 19~~claim 12, wherein the freezing medium comprises an active ingredient for incorporation into the beads.

Claim 21 (Currently Amended) A method according to ~~any of claims 18 to 20~~claim 18, wherein the active ingredient is selected from one or more from the following group;

pharmaceutical actives, pharmaceutical salts, enzymes, dyes, oxidising agents, cleaning agents, fabric softeners, clothes care agents, bleaches, reducing agents, flavours, fragrances, metal nanoparticles, vitamins and nutraceuticals.